

Michael Chapman 1934 – 2017

It was with great sadness that I arrived home after a few days away to receive the news that Mike had passed away. I had 'phoned him on the previous Wednesday, only to find that he had very unexpectedly been admitted to hospital. Having bravely battled prostrate cancer for two years, he was informed that it had spread to other vital organs and was given the devastating news that he had only a couple of months left to live. This was not to be and in fact two months came down to just four days!

Although I had known Mike for many years I knew very little of the man himself. He was a very private and insecure sort of person who spoke little about his life outside of his love and great interest in mills and Guide Dogs for the Blind, the latter as a result of his beloved wife Pam (who died suddenly 10 years ago) being blind.

Unquestionably his strength lay in his ability to source funding for the restoration work both at Stone Cross and Windmill Hill mills and he worked tirelessly to secure what was best for every aspect of the project. There were instances when he was not the easiest person to get on with but this was simply because he just wanted what was right for the mill and was determined that authenticity be adhered to. Mike was a true follower of the old adage '*if a job is worth doing it is worth doing well*'.

He was a staunch member of the Sussex Mills Group. Helping out at Cross-in-Hand mill and possible

restoration of Hellingly watermill were next on his ever-busy agenda, regrettably these were not to be.

Several years ago I persuaded him to join TIMS and he was so pleased that he did, enjoying and contributing to their excellent publications and on one occasion attending a symposium in Holland.

Mike was a mechanical and electrical engineer plus he



was a self-taught radio ham, all of which stood him in good stead when he did his National Service in the R.A.F. He was always keen to ensure that as many of our mills were 'on air' on National Mills Day. But it was also the Guide Dogs for the Blind that benefitted from Mike's attention and over the years he, along with his wife until her untimely death, raised in excess of one million pounds for the training and welfare of these wonderful animals. But no one can ever imagine the living hell he went through to achieve all that he did, for unbeknown to most he was severely Agoraphobic.....his fear of being in public places was for him terrifying and we can never in our wildest dreams imagine

just how he managed to do what he did.

Mike we admire you, we thank you for your invaluable contribution to the Sussex mills scene and we will miss you dearly.

Peter Hill